

# CALIFORNIA

## OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

### SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

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2002

INTEREST AREA  
MECHANICAL - SKILLED OCCUPATIONS



- Administer first aid to passengers if needed.
- Keep records such as distance traveled, driving time, or other records required by the employer.
- Report any bus malfunctions or needed repairs.
- Clean the bus interior.
- Make necessary emergency repairs on the road.
- Drive students to off-campus activities such as athletic events and field trips.

#### WHAT DOES A SCHOOL BUS DRIVER DO?

SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS operate gasoline, diesel, compressed natural gas or electric school buses to transport students from their neighborhoods to schools or school activities. They perform the following tasks:

- Usually drive the same route each day.
- Escort pre-kindergarten through eighth graders across roads and highways.
- Make sure the bus is in safe mechanical condition and required safety equipment, such as first aid kits and fire extinguishers, are available and working.
- Exercise particular caution when children are getting on or off the bus.
- Ensure students follow behavior rules while on the bus.

#### WHAT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?

The following skills, knowledge, and abilities are common to School Bus Drivers:

- Reaction Time – The ability to quickly respond (with the hand, finger, or foot) to one signal (sound, light, picture, etc.) when it appears.
- Far and Near Vision – The ability to see details at a distance or close at hand.
- Social Perceptiveness – Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react the way they do.
- Operation and Control – Controlling operations of equipment or systems.
- Speaking – Talking to others to effectively convey information.
- Equipment Maintenance – Performing routine maintenance and determining when and what kind of maintenance is needed.

## WHAT'S THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

All buses are heated and some are air-conditioned; however, Drivers experience heat, cold, rain, or wind because they frequently must open the door and sometimes escort students across the street.

School Bus Drivers occasionally deal with unruly student passengers. They may sometimes experience the stress of heavy traffic conditions, time schedule commitments, and delays. On the other hand, many Drivers enjoy the opportunity to work without direct supervision while being responsible for the bus and passengers.

### Unions

School Bus Drivers often belong to unions such as the Amalgamated Transit Union, the Transport Workers Union of America, the United Transportation Union, and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

## WHAT'S THE CALIFORNIA JOB OUTLOOK?

The following information is from the occupational projections produced by the Employment Development Department's Labor Market Information Division:

Estimated number of workers in 1998:	25,000
Estimated number of workers in 2008:	32,300
Projected Growth 1998-2008:	29.2%
Est. openings due to separations by 2008:	5,100

*These figures do not include self-employment.*

The number of School Bus Drivers is projected to grow faster than average compared with all occupations between the years 1998 and 2008.

### Trends

The number of School Bus Drivers is expected to increase as a result of growth in elementary and secondary school enrollments. Additionally, more families are moving to suburban areas outside of the cities where school buses are increasingly used to transport students.

## WHAT DOES THE JOB PAY?

### California Earnings

#### School Bus Drivers 2001 Wages

Hourly wages range from	\$10.36	to	\$15.39
Average hourly wage	\$12.83		
Average annual wage	\$26,670		

*Source: Occupational Employment Survey of Employers by EDD/LMID.*

### Hours

Most School Bus Driver positions are part-time, with many drivers working 20 hours per week or fewer, and splitting their time between morning and afternoon shifts. Most Drivers work a ten-month year; some districts, however, have year-round sessions.

### Benefits

Benefits usually include sick leave, medical and life insurance, and retirement programs. However, School Bus Drivers rarely receive vacation pay since they do not work when school is not in session. School Bus Drivers on permanent status enjoy paid holidays that occur during school sessions.

## HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB?

### Education and Training

Employers usually require a high school diploma. The legal minimum age is 18 to drive a bus within the state. Drivers must be at least 21 to drive a bus across state lines. Drivers over 70 must pass an annual medical exam.

### Licensing and Certification

The California Highway Patrol oversees and requires the following for each School Bus Driver:

- California School Bus Drivers Certificate
- Class "A" or "B" Commercial Drive License (CDL) with a "P" passenger endorsement
- First aid Certificate
- Medical Certificate

Applicants must complete a minimum 40-hour training program (20 hours of classroom and 20 hours of instruction behind the wheel) to qualify to take the exam. School Bus Drivers normally must pass oral and written exams given by State-certified instructors who work for school districts, private schools, or private school bus contractors.

Many school districts do not require prior bus driving experience. However, prospective Drivers must be able to obtain a California Class B driver's license. To qualify for the required Class B license endorsed for passenger transportation, applicants must be able to pass a pre-employment physical examination by a medical doctor that includes a vision test. The license is issued by the California Department of Motor Vehicles.

A School Bus Office Coordinator is located in each local California Highway Patrol area office to help job seekers with the School Bus certification process.

School Bus Drivers must have a clean police record. Most employers check official motor vehicle records. All employers require drug testing prior to hiring and test employees randomly.

Applicants must be able to read schedules, traffic and road condition signs, and keep accident and mileage record reports.

### ***Continuing Education***

School Bus Drivers need to take ten hours of in-service training each year to keep their certificate current.

### **HOW DO I FIND THE JOB?**

Job seekers should apply directly to school districts, private schools, or private school bus contractors. They may also want to register with local unions, check newspaper help wanted ads, and network with Drivers who are currently working.

Direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods. Private firms are listed in the yellow pages under Buses-School Transportation Services. California job

openings can be found at various online job-listing systems including CalJOBS<sup>SM</sup> at [www.caljobs.ca.gov](http://www.caljobs.ca.gov) or at America's Job Bank at [www.ajb.dni.us](http://www.ajb.dni.us).

For other occupational and wage information and a listing of the largest employers in any county, visit the Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Web page at [www.calmis.ca.gov](http://www.calmis.ca.gov). Find further job search assistance from your nearest Job Service office [www.edd.ca.gov/jsloc.htm](http://www.edd.ca.gov/jsloc.htm) or the closest One-Stop site listed on the California WorkNet site, [www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop](http://www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop).

### **WHERE CAN THIS JOB LEAD?**

School Bus Drivers occasionally move from part-time status to full-time status after a period of months or years on the job with an employer. However, most School Bus Drivers who desire higher wages or full-time work switch to transit or inter-city bus driving, taxi driving, or truck driving. Some School Bus Drivers become School Bus Driver Instructors.

### **OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

California Highway Patrol  
Commercial Vehicle Section/062  
P. O. Box 942898  
Sacramento, CA 94298-0001  
(916) 445-1865  
[www.chp.ca.gov](http://www.chp.ca.gov)

California Department of Education  
Office of School Transportation  
3500 Reed Avenue  
West Sacramento, CA 95605  
(916) 375-7100  
[www.cde.ca.gov/bus](http://www.cde.ca.gov/bus)

Department of Motor Vehicles  
Commercial Driving License Unit  
P.O. Box 944278 – MS-G204  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2780  
(916) 657-5771  
[www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov)

California Association of School Transportation  
Officials  
P.O. Box 71165  
Bakersfield, CA 93387  
(661) 852-5900  
[www.castoways.org](http://www.castoways.org)

Employment Projections by Occupation  
[www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/occproj.htm](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/occproj.htm)

Employment and Wages by Occupation  
[www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup\\$/OES\\$.htm](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup$/OES$.htm)

### RELATED OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

Bus Drivers	No. 2
Forklift Operators	No. 190
Truck Drivers, Heavy	No. 255

### OCCUPATIONAL CODE REFERENCES

**SOC** (*Standard Occupational Classification*)  
Bus Drivers, School 53-3022

**O\*NET** (*Occupational Information Network*)  
Bus Drivers, School 53-3022.00

**OES** (*Occupational Employment Statistics*)  
Bus Drivers, School 97111

**DOT** (*Dictionary of Occupational Titles*)  
Bus Driver, School 913.463-010